



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, WA 98101-3140

OFFICE OF
ECOSYSTEMS, TRIBAL AND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

December 16, 2011

Slater Turner, District Ranger
Lookout Mountain District
Ochoco National Forest
3160 NE. Third Street
Prineville, Oregon 97754

Re: Comments on the Final EIS for Marks Creek Allotment Management Plans.
EPA Project Ref: 11-007-AFS.

Dear Mr. Turner:

In accordance with our responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (CAA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the US Forest Service (FS) Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Marks Creek Allotment Management Plans on the Lookout Mountain Ranger District of the Ochoco National Forest in Crook County, Oregon.

In our comments on the draft EIS in September 2011, the EPA expressed environmental concerns about the project due to its potential to degrade water quality in already impaired streams due to exceedances of water quality standards primarily for temperature. We recommended that the FEIS describe actions to improve thermal conditions of those streams, and discuss potential bacteria and nutrient impacts to water quality and measures to reduce their loading in affected water bodies.

The FEIS was responsive to our comments on the draft EIS. In particular, we are pleased with the commitment to end Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use in the project area in the near future, thus eliminating their effects on resources and conflicts between OHV use and livestock grazing in the analysis area. We also appreciate additional clarifying information on other measures to protect resources from grazing impacts, enhanced monitoring strategies to take corrective actions where other management actions would fail to meet standards, and other changes made to the EIS between draft and final based on public comments. Your responses address our concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this FEIS. If you have questions concerning this review, please contact me at (206) 553-1601 or by electronic mail at reichgott.christine@epa.gov or contact Theogene Mbabaliye of my staff at (206) 553-6322 or by electronic mail at mbabaliye.theogene@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Christine B. Reichgott", is positioned above the typed name.

Christine B. Reichgott, Manager
Environmental Review and Sediment Management Unit